

March 19, 2019

Dear Governor Lamont, Distinguished Chairs and Members,

My name is Lisa Sallese and I am writing today in **strong opposition** to proposed **Bills 738, 457, 874 AND 7192.**

The four bills as stated above, and any others regarding forced consolidation of schools and any other services, will have a profound negative impact on families all across Connecticut. Forced consolidation of any kind is nothing short of collectivism. America was built on the freedom to choose – and we have the opportunity to choose the best educational path for our children. Research top school districts in Connecticut and you'll see that the kids are thriving academically, especially in Wilton where my family resides.

We have greatly benefited from the care and support of our Wilton schools. Our town is extremely focused on best possible outcomes for our kids. My husband and I have 2 typically developing children and one daughter with special needs. At the time of her birth, she had a 20% chance of surviving past her first year. We've endured 8 surgeries for our daughter, countless therapy sessions, doctor's visits and meetings with the school. We've worked so hard to integrate our baby with her peers. 1 specialist said that she probably wouldn't have the capacity to integrate well due to various challenges she would face – but ask her teachers and they'll tell you- she not only integrates well, at times, she's taken on a leadership role among her peers!

She will always be one of the hardest working kids in her class due to her significant hearing loss, but the encouragement, structure and focus her school has provided, and the constant push to have her achieve more, are what makes the Wilton school system so special. We've always said there is no ceiling where our daughter is concerned and thankfully our district has always agreed. She has come so far thanks to her teachers and administrators. We are forever grateful to them. Wilton has a solid team. In demolishing this gem of a school system, you will jeopardize everything our family and our school system is striving to provide for our daughter and countless other children.

You were elected to make things better for education and services in Connecticut – not worse. You have the power to fix what's actually broken here - but not by breaking us in the process. By dismantling our fiscally responsible, local school districts, you would be tearing apart what we have achieved in each of our towns. Our local schools are what's working well in our state! We have sought-after towns in Connecticut. People move here for our great communities and stellar school districts. If these bills pass, Connecticut will not only lose prospective buyers, but businesses as well. Our state cannot afford to make such a catastrophic decision as to force regionalization. You would be changing the very essence of each adored Connecticut community and the exceptional schools that are our touchstone.

Thank you and please vote NO,

Lisa Sallese

6 McFadden Drive

Wilton, CT 06897